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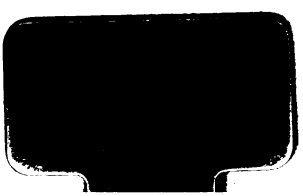

Author's kind regards.

THE

MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD

IN THE

DISPENSATION OF THE GOSPEL,

VINDICATED;

IN

Observations on the System of Theology,

TAUGHT BY THE

REV. DR. HAWKER,

Vicar of Charles, Plymouth.

BY ISAIAH BIRT.

A King shall reign in righteousness. *Isaiah* xxxii. 1.

Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. *Heb.* vii. 8, 9.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following observations were originally addressed to a gentleman, who had requested my opinion on several tracts written by the Rev. Dr. Hawker. I have thrown them into their present form and given them publicity, by the desire of persons to whose judgment I am accustomed to pay great deference.

The opponents of the system which is adopted and maintained by Dr. Hawker have chiefly insisted on its evil consequences; my endeavours have been to point out some of its defects only, conceiving such a method to be equally convincing, and less offensive to those whose system I most decidedly impugn, but for whose persons I entertain no feeling but what is involved in my most ardent desires for my own present and eternal welfare.

I. B.

Birmingham,
August, 12, 1824.

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THE

MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD,

&c.

SECTION I.

Preliminary Remarks.

In this free country, every inhabitant possesses a right to publish his sentiments on all subjects. In some instances we are amenable to the laws of our country for what we promulgate. In all matters authors place themselves at the tribunal of the community, every individual of which has the privilege to examine, and judge, to censure or approve their production, either in their own minds, in their conversation, or by their writings. This common right is claimed and acted upon in the following strictures on the system of theology taught by Doctor Hawker. To

such a procedure the Doctor, however impatient of opposition, can have no just or reasonable objection, as he publishes much, censures many, and both invites and defies the 'eagle eye of the severest criticism.'*

Before I enter upon my particular design, I beg to premise,

1. That I consider Dr. H's general and severe censures on evangelical ministers and churches, as most unjust in themselves, as betraying a very unchristian spirit towards his brethren, and as exceedingly calculated to create and promote a most baneful prejudice.

2. That by his sweeping and very serious censures, so extensively circulated, the Doctor has made it incumbent on evangelical ministers and churches, either to submit to his dogmas, or to vindicate themselves and their ministry from his charges: and it is under this impression I have been prevailed upon to give publicity to these observations.

* Appen. p. 21.

3. That I by no means take the high ground on which the Doctor presumes to stand, when he contends that his writings 'are in perfect harmony with the gospel of Christ and his apostles.'* I am free to acknowledge, that I "see but as through a glass darkly," and "know but in part." Yet I venture to claim that attention and regard from my readers, which are due to upright intention, an entire deference to the authority of the sacred oracles, a diligent and prayerful examination of their contents, and a most sincere conviction that, where I differ from the venerable Doctor, I am supported by the word of God, to which both of us equally make our appeal as the only and perfect standard of divine truth.

4. That it is matter of just surprise, not to say suspicion, that an author who claims for his writings 'perfect harmony with Christ and his apostles,' should so exceedingly differ from them in his phraseology; so that, in few authors who write on divine subjects,

* Appeal. p. 5, 6.

are to be found more unscriptural expressions than those which appear in the writings of Doctor Hawker.

5. Not to give an opinion whether humility or presumption appears most prominent in the claim to 'perfect harmony with Christ and his apostles,'—having been long in the habit of thinking and acting in opposition to as high and much more generally allowed claims to infallibility, so far from being intimidated by such an assumption, I am rather the more induced to examine the principles on which it is founded, and to search the scriptures in order to see whether it be really so.

6. Whilst I cannot but strongly express my disapprobation of the spirit indulged by the Doctor towards other ministers, so far as I know my own heart, I feel no resentment; but great pity, that so aged and so venerable a minister should, in the close of life, employ his extensive influence to excite prejudice against those who love our Lord Jesus Christ sincerely, and preach him faithfully.

7. That I esteem it my honour to be of the

number of the evangelical ministers who come under the Doctor's censure. In the following observations I place myself on the defensive, whilst I endeavour to shew that I am subject to the Doctor's censures, solely because he entertains and promulgates a defective and contracted system of theology. Within the circumference of that system, from my regard to revealed truth, my respect for the honours of righteousness, my loyalty to God my Saviour, and my concern for the salvation of my fellow-men, I cannot suffer myself to be circumscribed.

SECTION II.

Doctor Hawker's General System of Theology defective.

"SOME indeed," says the apostle Paul, "preach Christ even of envy and strife, and some of good will. The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds; but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the Gospel. What then? Notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."*

The spirit manifested by the apostle in this language, well becomes the ministers of the gospel in their observations on each other's ministry, especially when they find themselves obliged to express their disapprotion, or to pass a censure. It is not only

* Phil. i. 15, 16, 17, 18.

unjust to pass sweeping censures on whole communities of men, on account of individual improprieties; but it may be equally wrong to condemn the whole ministry of an individual, because there are weaknesses, defects, or even some errors in his ministry. We may justly rejoice that the foundation is laid, whilst we deeply lament that much wood, hay, and stubble are built thereon. It is on these principles, and with this frame of mind, I would state it to be my most decided opinion, that Doctor Hawker's general scheme of theology is very defective, and that he adopts and maintains a part only of the system revealed to us in the oracles of God. He says 'The following may be considered as a specimen of all I preach or write.'*

'The sovereignty of Jehovah, in his trinity of persons, manifesting his grace to his church in Christ before all worlds; and conducting her through the whole of this time-state to glory, to be holy and without blame before him in love for ever; this is the

* True Portraiture of Antinomianism, p. 6.

one grand bottom on which I build all my discourses, whether from the pulpit or the press. The everlasting, electing, unchanging love of God the Father; the person, glory, grace, blood-shedding, righteousness, and finished salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ; and the equal love, grace, and favour of God the Holy Ghost, manifested to the church before all time, and in his quickening operations on every individual member of Christ's mystical body here below, leading them from grace to glory;—these are the glorious doctrines I preach. These I make the groundwork of all practical godliness; and without which nothing of true godliness can arise in the soul. Neither should I consider that sermon or that writing on divine things finished, but miserably incomplete and undeserving attention, where these grand truths of God were thrown in the back ground of the subject, and not brought forward as the first and last of all points to be insisted on.'

Without raising a single question on the truth or accuracy of the doctrine, or doctrines, contained in this 'specimen,' given by the

Doctor, 'of all he preaches or writes,' and which he would have 'brought forward as the first and the last of all points to be insisted on,' it appears to me in several particulars exceedingly defective.

1. When the Doctor presents us with this specimen of his ministry, it is impossible to forget that he claims for it a 'perfect harmony with that of Christ and his apostles,' or to refrain from looking for the features of similarity and correspondence. However solicitous I am not to offend the Doctor by saying the specimen he has given us of his ministry is at 'variance' with that of Christ and his apostles, he must permit me to insist that the perfect harmony for which he contends, is far, very far from being evident in the phraseology and manner in which he has given his system. The sacred records furnish us with several specimens of the preaching of Christ and his apostles, but it would be extremely difficult to find one presented to us in language bearing any striking resemblance to that employed by the Doctor in the above specimen. Yet we might justly have

expected this to have occurred, had the Doctor been in perfect harmony with them. If we compare the following specimen of our Lord's ministry with that given by the Doctor, we shall perceive a striking discrepancy, rather than a perfect harmony.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."* "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."† "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."‡ "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he

* Luke iv. 18, 19. † Mark ii. 17. ‡ Luke xix. 10.

that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."* "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."† In the sermon on the mount, and in the other specimens of our Lord's ministry, there is no pomp of words, no effort, no appearance of display. They are the words of him who was "meek and lowly in heart," who would "not break a bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax." In addition to the discourses delivered by Peter and Paul, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, the apostle Paul, in more than one instance, gives specimens of his ministry; but certainly, his language and manner are not in perfect harmony with the above specimen given by Doctor Hawker.

"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord,

* John iii. 16, 17, 18. † Matt. xi. 28, 29, 30.

we persuade men. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech by us; we pray in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working which worketh in me mightily."† The manner in which our Lord and his apostles express themselves in these statements, compared with that in which the Doctor gives the specimen of all his preaching and writings, so far from being confirma-

* 2 Cor. v. passim. † Col. i. 28, 29.

tory of his high claims to perfect harmony, obliges us strongly to suspect that there is, somewhere or other, a very considerable discordancy between the ministry of Doctor Hawker and the ministry of Christ and his apostles.

This dissimilarity becomes additionally manifest, when the frame of mind with which the apostle Paul contemplated the subjects of his ministry, is placed in contrast with that evinced by Doctor Hawker. Thus the apostle: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?"* 'For my own part,' says Dr. Hawker, 'I am free to confess, (and I care not who knows it, though it expose me to the contempt of both professor and profane,) that these things are as familiar to me by faith, as the objects of sight to sense, with which I am daily occupied.'†

* Rom. xi. 33, 34. † Best of Remedies, p. 17.

2. In the specimen which the Doctor has given us of all he preaches or writes, the salvation of the church is the great and only end designed by the Divine Being in the economy of grace. In this specimen the Doctor neither states, nor even alludes to any other end. Whilst we rejoice that the salvation of sinners is an end, and a blessed end, both designed and accomplished in God's gracious dispensations, we most readily and cheerfully acknowledge that there is a much higher end, which may be justly denominated "the first and the last," and to which the salvation of men is but a means.

God who is before, and infinitely above all other beings, has made all things for himself. He hath made "known the riches of his glory in the vessels of mercy."* All his dispensations towards the church, from first to last, are "to the praise of his glory."† In the above specimen, the Doctor, in his fond solicitude for the privileges of the church, appears to have forgotten the glory due to his God.

* Rom. ix. 23. † Eph. i. 12.

The angels themselves teach us to ascribe "glory to God in the highest," and then "peace on earth, and good will towards men."*

3. In the specimen which the Doctor himself has given us, as containing the first and the last of all points to be insisted upon in the gospel ministry, there is an evident defect in the exhibition of the character of God. The only attributes with which he has clothed the Divine Majesty are those of sovereignty and grace. These, most undoubtedly, belong to him in their highest degree: but he is also infinitely holy, righteous, and just. He is "righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.†" We rejoice that he is the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords;" that he "doeth whatsoever pleaseth him,"‡ in heaven above and in the earth beneath; that in all parts of his dominion his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure.‖ But we rejoice in his sovereignty, because "righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his

* Luke ii. 14. † Ps. cxlv. 17. ‡ Eccles. viii. 3.
‖ Isaiah xlvi. 10.

throne."* In these he always resides. The Judge of all the earth uniformly does right.† "He is the Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."‡ All his sovereign purposes are invariably carried into execution in perfect righteousness, in the government both of the world and of the church. He is equally holy, righteous, and just, in the dispensations of his mercy, and in the manifestations of his wrath.

One can scarcely conceive of any system of religion, that will not recognize both sovereignty and placability in the deity that is to be worshipped. Mahomet scrupled not to give these a very prominent place in the system which he promulgated. But it is in the gospel of Jesus Christ alone, that mercy and truth meet together, that righteousness and peace embrace each other.|| It is in the gospel only we behold a just God and a Saviour.¶ It is here, in this revelation of mercy exclusively, that righteousness goes

* Ps. xcvii. 2. † Gen. xviii. 25. ‡ Deut. xxxii. 4.
|| Ps. lxxxv. 10. ¶ Isa. xlv. 21.

before the Divine Majesty, and sets us in the way of his steps.* Here it is, indeed, that grace in full sovereignty reigns; but it is "through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."†

Now it is lamentable that such a man as Doctor Hawker should give the greatest, if not the only prominency in his ministry, to that which is in some degree common to all religions, to the great neglect of that which is the most distinguishing peculiarity of the glorious gospel of the blessed God, and gives it its brightest lustre. It is not the sovereignty or favour of God absolutely considered, or as exercised towards innocent creatures, that excites the supreme admiration of the angels; with these they have been acquainted from their creation, in their own election, preservation, and happiness: but they come to the church,‡ and desire to look into the manifold wisdom of God, evinced in the honours paid and secured to the divine holiness, righteousness, and justice, in the salvation of fallen men through the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

* Ps. lxxxv. 13. † Rom. v. 21. ‡ Eph. iii. 10.

SECTION III.

Doctor Hawker's Statement of Justification defective.

DOCTOR HAWKER is truly systematic. The 'divine sovereignty manifesting grace to the church,' appears in almost every page of his writings; but the moral government of God, if not totally, is greatly neglected. In this point it is he fails, not only as it concerns his general system, but also as it affects every particular doctrine. The moral government of God, and the moral agency of man, are scarcely noticed by him, except as subjects of disputation.

Consistently with the scheme of theology which he has adopted, he would make us believe that every real christian is an antinomian; or, as he expresses it, 'that every true antinomian is, and must be, by the very nature of his principles, a regenerated child of God.'

What antinomianism is, the Doctor himself shall tell us.

'The word antinomian is well known to be formed from a Greek compound, anti-nomos; the nearest literal translation of which is, against law. And the meaning, when applied to any person in relation to religion, is, that he who is an antinomian, is looking for justification before God, solely on the footing of Christ's person, blood, and righteousness, without an eye to the deeds of the law; yea, even against them.'*

The latter part of this statement is incorrect, and is subject to a strong objection. The question on antinomianism respects the law as a rule of conduct, not in point of justification. The ministers to whom the Doctor points the finger of scorn, as preaching a motley gospel, would not give place to Doctor Hawker, no, not for a moment, in exhibiting an entire and exclusive dependence on the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ alone, as the ground of

* True Portrait of Antinomianism, p. 26.

a sinner's acceptance and justification before God. But waving this, and taking the Doctor on his own statement, it is exceedingly incorrect, not to say most absurd, for him to represent a person as looking to the blood and righteousness of Christ for his justification before God, and yet being so opposed to his law as to be against it: 'without having an eye to its deeds, yea even against them.' Had the Doctor said that a man might be the slave of satan, live in a state of sin and rebellion against God, after the fashion of this world, or in a state of self-dependence, and be against the law, 'without having an eye to the deeds of the law, yea, even against them,'—he might have been understood; "because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."* But when he speaks of a person who is renewed by the Holy Spirit, and who is looking to the blood and righteousness of Christ for justification before the righteous

* Rom. viii. 7.

and just God, with his heart so set against his holy, just, and good law, as to have no eye to its deeds, any farther than as he is disaffected towards it; he states that which is not only incorrect and unscriptural, but also that which is extravagantly impossible.

The law, (or the deeds of the law, which are synonymous in the Doctor's statement,) consists in its precepts, its promise, and its penalties.

The precepts or requirements of the law are, that God should be loved with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the mind; and our neighbours as ourselves.* The promise is, "This do and thou shalt live."† And the penalty or threatening is, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."‡ "Sin is the transgression of the law,"‖ and righteousness is conformity to the law. Now, how is it possible for a person to look for his justification before God, solely on the footing of Christ's

* Matt. xxii. 37—39. † Luke x. 28. ‡ Gal. iii. 10.
‖ John iii. 4.

person, blood, and righteousness, without having an eye to the law and its deeds? By the law he has the knowledge of his sin,* guilt, and inability. He was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived and he died.† In our Lord's obedience to the death of the cross, he sees the law of God, though broken by him, fulfilled by one in his nature, who on his behalf hath magnified it in all its precepts, and made it honourable in suffering its penalties.‡ And in the exaltation and high rewards of our Lord, he sees its promise supremely consummated; so that in looking to the Saviour, either in his life, death, or exaltation, we must necessarily have an 'eye to the law and its deeds.' In him is presented the most complete view of the law of God. In other exhibitions the law is seen in its parts: on mount Sinai, in its precepts; in heaven, in its rewards; in hell, in its awful penalties. But in the Mediator of the new covenant, who for transgressors fulfilled the broken law

* Rom. iii. 20. † Rom. vii. 9. ‡ Isa. xlii. 21.

of God, in him, and in him alone, the law is seen as a whole, in all its deeds, its precepts, penalties, and rewards. It was by thus fulfilling the law, that our Lord finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in the everlasting righteousness* with which God is infinitely well pleased, and through which he can, consistently with all the perfections of his nature and the utmost rectitude of his government, pardon and justify the guilty children of men, and render them eternally blessed. It is in the revelation of this righteousness only, that the Lawgiver and Judge appears the just God and yet a Saviour. Those blessings of which we partake through abounding grace and mercy, were obtained for us by the deeds of the law and at the hand of justice. We receive an "abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, by Jesus Christ."† That the believer in our Lord Jesus Christ is against the law, is a doctrine as revolting to the believer's heart, as it is repugnant to his under-

* Dan. ix. 24. † Rom. v. 17.

standing, and to the whole spirit of revelation. In the person of our Lord, the Mediator, who "was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," the believer sees that purity which the law approves. In his life appears all that righteousness which the law demands. In his death is given all the honour which the justice of the law requires. It appears to be impossible either to know, to approve, to trust, to love, to imitate, to serve or desire conformity to the Lord our Saviour, with a mind averse to the holy, righteous, and good law of God, or with a heart disaffected to any of its just enactments. To the slightest suggestion of such a frame of mind in the believer, one might most justly and naturally reply:—Is the law of God sin then, that his servants should be against it? God forbid. The law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good;* and as such, has it not the highest claims on their esteem, affection, and obedience?

Had God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, such respect to the law, as to make the fulfilment of it the work which he gave

* Rom. vii. 7, 12.

his only begotten son to perform? In the execution of this work did he express his high approbation by a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him?"* As a reward for this incomparable service, the fulfilling his broken law, has God highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name?† On account of his voluntary and righteous labours and sufferings, does God pardon, justify, and glorify unnumbered myriads of the fallen and guilty children of men? Had the Lord our Redeemer, when he came to save, the law of God in his heart? Did he, as the great expression of his love to God and man, magnify the law and make it honourable, that he might be the end of the law for righteousness to them that believe in him,‡ that God might be just and the justifier of the ungodly?|| And is it possible that the Divine Being should so supremely maintain the honours of his law in the redemption and

* Matt. xvii. 5. † Phil. ii. 9. ‡ Rom. x. 4.
|| Rom. iii. 26.

justification of believers, and that he should be in any degree inattentive to these honours in their sanctification and government? Or is there a possibility for the sinner who is enlightened, convinced, and led by the Holy Spirit to contemplate with the most cordial approbation this scene of wonders, righteousness and mercy, and by faith to receive this righteousness of God, "which is unto all and upon all them that believe,"* to be either in judgment or heart 'against the law?' With all the powers of his mind and feelings of his heart, the believer says, "Is the law then against the promises of God?"† or "Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law."‡

All that are born of God and believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, abhor and strive against sin, because it is the transgression of the law. They renounce all merit on account of their own deeds of righteousness, from first to last, because they want conformity to the law. They trust in, and plead before God, the right-

* Rom. iii. 28. † Gal. iii. 21. ‡ Rom. iii. 31.

ousness of Christ alone, because it is the fulfilment of the law, is fully answerable to all the demands of justice, and is exactly suited to their state as transgressors. They are "not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,"* whom they choose as the only leader and example whom they implicitly obey and follow, because his will and life alone are a perfect transcript of the law. The Holy Spirit has put the law of God into their minds, and written it on their hearts.† They delight in the law of God after the inward man, and serve the law with their minds. The law in their members, warring against the law of their minds, renders them wretched; and they earnestly desire deliverance from it.‡ In prospect of such deliverance, they thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord, whose face they long to see in righteousness; and then, and not till then, will they be satisfied when they awake with his likeness.|| They, and they alone, respect the perfection of the law in the ground of their dependence, in the

* 1 Cor. ix. 21. † Heb. viii. 10. ‡ Rom. vii.
|| Psa. xvii. 15.

standard of their lives, and in the supreme desire of their souls. Yet these are the persons whom Doctor Hawker ventures to exhibit, in opposition to every thing that is reasonable, just, and scriptural, as 'against the law!' Transubstantiation itself does not present either a more palpable or revolting absurdity, than does Dr. Hawker's doctrine, that those who are renewed by the Holy Spirit, who are believers in our Lord and Saviour, and who are brought into fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, are necessarily 'against the law' of the Lord their God.

SECTION IV.

Doctor Hawker defective in his statements on the Ministry of the Gospel.

In this section our attention is directed, not to another subject, but to the same subject under a different form. I am at issue with the Doctor, not so much in point of fact, as I am on the circumstances attendant on allowed truths. On the personality and agency of the Holy Spirit we are agreed, and that the Gospel should be preached through all the world: but in respect to the circumstances attendant on these allowed doctrines, I believe more than Doctor Hawker does.

To me he appears unscripturally circumscribed, and very defective in the representations which he gives of the gospel ministry.

'Where shall we go,' says the Doctor, 'to what congregation of what are called evangelical churches shall we join ourselves, to hear the person, work, offices, characters, and relations of the Lord Jesus Christ, held up as the alpha and omega, in God's view, and in his people's view, of the salvation of his people?'* 'Were it not for the awfulness of the subject, a man might smile to hear what very wooing and winning words are made use of by them, to gain upon the hearts of their hearers by human persuasion offers of Christ, yea, pressing Christ upon the congregation, are the chief topics adopted. And sometimes from the great earnestness with which they have worked up their natural feelings to persuade, they enforce the present opportunity as if, should it be neglected, never another perhaps may be afforded them.'†—'To preach the gospel, and to proclaim salvation in the audience of all sinners, wheresoever they came, this was the apostles province; and the same will all

* The True Gospel. p. 13. † p. 5.

faithful servants of the Lord do now, who are ordained by the Holy Spirit. For "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 14. 15. But here are the limits to human powers. No man can go further. Moses himself went no further. He lifted up the serpent, as commanded, as a type of Christ, that the bitten Israelites might look upon it and live. But we read of no offers nor persuasions, Numbers xxi. 8. 9. Neither did the apostles in their general preaching. If indeed in special cases, (as we shall observe hereafter,) they found their minds directed by the Lord to act in a more personal manner, their history fully explains the cause. But otherwise they were too well taught of God. They dared not to invade the office of God the Holy Ghost. To preach Christ they knew to be their province. To persuade to the acceptation of Christ they knew to be his.'*

* Appenix, p. 24.

Passing by some other topics which offer themselves, the above statements appear to be evidently contracted and defective, and to proceed from Dr. Hawker's uniform inattention to the moral government of God, and to those obligations which it necessarily involves.

Though, in many instances, it is doubtless far beyond our ability to perceive the perfect agreement of the sovereign decrees and government of the Almighty with our free agency and moral obligation; yet there can be no reasonable doubt, that in the divine economy they are in perfect harmony. The sovereign and moral government of God are both presented to our regard in the sacred oracles. The one has more respect to the end, the other to the means. The one is more secret, the other more plainly revealed. The one forms a ground for our utmost confidence, the other a directory and rule for our conduct. Many divines have made the above difficulty an occasion to respect God in his moral adminstration only, and in their ministry to insist exclusively on those obli-

gations which arise from our relation and responsibility to God as our Creator, Governor and Judge. To avoid this great defect the Doctor evidently runs into the opposite extreme, by insisting on the Divine sovereignty to the neglect of human obligation. Both parties are pressed with the same difficulty, and fly from it into opposite extremes. Their unchastened minds will not suffer them, with humility and meekness, to believe and respect both the sovereign and moral government of God, by submitting to the obedience of faith. In both cases the weakness and pride of man are displayed, in their equally making their own conceptions and systems the standard of their decision, rather than surrender themselves with childlike simplicity to the revelation which God has given of himself in his word.

There is nothing more evident in the holy scriptures, than that the work of the Holy Spirit is conducted by means and instruments. The more special means of his operation is the word of truth, or the gospel; the instruments are principally the mi-

nisters of the divine word. This medium of operation involves the moral government of God. It requires human agency, and presupposes imperious obligations and high responsibility. This will easily account for Doctor Hawker's so seldom alluding to either means or instruments, when treating on the agency and work of the Spirit. Yet this medium of operation comes so frequently and interestingly before us in the perusal of the divine word, that hypothesis and system must have a most extraordinary influence on the mind of that person by whom it can possibly be overlooked and neglected.

Even the inspired records themselves were given by instruments. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." * Miraculous powers were exercised through the same medium, and so intimately are the means and instruments connected with divine influence in the sanctification of men, that the same work is attributed to the Spirit, to the word, and to minis-

* 2 Peter i. 21.

ters; the work of regeneration itself not excepted. Our Lord, in the third chapter of John, speaks of the new birth as being born of the Spirit and from above.* The apostle Paul says to the Corinthians, "I have begotten you through the Gospel;"† and Peter treats of it as being effected "by the word of God."‡ This medium of operation is with great uniformity observed in the conversion of sinners, and in the edification of the church: "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."||

The means and instruments are justly acknowledged to be wholly inefficient of themselves, but they are "mighty through

* John iii. 5, 6. † 1 Cor. iv. 15. ‡ 1 Peter. i. 23.
|| Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13.

God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."* The gospel treasure is in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.† Ministers of themselves are not sufficient for anything, but their sufficiency is of God, and they can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth them.‡ They are "workers together with" God.‖ Their speech and their preaching are in demonstration of the Spirit and in power."§ Thus employed, the ministers of Christ receive a commission to teach all nations, and to preach the gospel to every creature.¶ They are "sent to turn men from darkness to light and from the power of satan to God."** The word of salvation is committed to them as a trust. They are subject to high demands.

* 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. † 2 Cor. iv. 7. ‡ Phil. iv. 13.
‖ 2 Cor. vi. 1. § 1 Cor. ii. 4. ¶ Mark xvi. 15.
** Acts xxvi. 18.

It is required that they give themselves wholly to their work;* their bodies and souls, the powers of their minds and the strongest feelings of their hearts. They are not their own but the Lord's property. They have the most important duties to perform both towards man and God; and they are under the highest responsibility. "They are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish. To the one they are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?"†

Christianity does not lessen, but rather increase our obligations. It loosens no previous ties to either God or man, but more clearly defines them, and draws them closer. All the duties to which our nature was bound by the law, are ratified by the gospel. Obligation always keeps pace with privilege and voluntary engagement. The greater the privilege and the more important the engagement, the stronger is the obligation. The

* 1 Tim. iv. 15. † 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

ministers of the gospel are not only bound to the love of God and man, by the law of their nature and by the general profession of christianity, but also by the voluntary services of their office. They pledge themselves to the most entire devotedness to the promotion of the divine glory, and the advancement of the best interests of men. Hence they sustain characters to which attach important services and high responsibility. They are servants, they are soldiers, they are stewards, they are workers together with God. In these characters they are the subjects of commands, of exhortations, of warnings, and encouragements. They are charged "before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, to preach the word, to be instant in season, and out of season, to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine."* Now what is the appropriate duty of persons thus related to God, and thus employed for men? Is it a cautious fear lest

* 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.

they should go beyond their commission, or of exceeding in the discharge of their duty? Will men thus engaged lay restrictions on the powers of their minds, or the feelings of their hearts? Will they not rather, with glowing love to their fellow creatures and tender compassion for their fellow sinners, pour out the desire of their heart in prayer to God that they may be saved? As the appointed instruments of mercy, will they not go into the streets and lanes of the city, and into the highways and hedges, and by all possible arguments, persuasions, warnings, and invitations, compel them to come to the gospel feast?

Ministers divinely taught and influenced, will consider their commission, and the trust committed to them, as pointing out the extent of their duty; the promised presence of their Lord, and the almighty agency of the Holy Spirit, as their support and encouragement. Thus directed, supported, and encouraged, they will go every where preaching the word, testifying to the Jew and also to the Greek, repentance towards God, and faith towards

our Lord Jesus Christ: saying, "Repent ye and believe the Gospel;" as did the great Preacher of righteousness, when he came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God."*

Such was the conduct of those ministers of Christ, who first promulgated his gospel in the world; and those of his servants in the present day who are not cramped by human systems, and whose hearts are not contracted—I had almost said hardened—by baneful prejudice, will also be able to address all their hearers in the following language of the apostle—"Being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted to you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us."†

Infidels may be gratified to obtain the venerable Doctor Hawker as an auxiliary, in holding up to the smile of contempt the affection and zeal of evangelical ministers, whilst those ministers themselves deeply lament that they do not, like the apostle, travail in birth

* Mark i. 14, 15. † 1 Thess. ii. 8.

for their hearers, until Christ be formed in them;* and like him, more gladly spend and be spent for them.† Whilst to be "without natural affection,"‡ is a scriptural mark of the reprobate, notwithstanding Dr. Hawker's ridicule, the faithful ministers of Christ will be desirous for their natural feelings to be so wrought upon by the circumstances of perishing sinners, that they may increasingly contemplate their awful state, as our Lord did that of the city of Jerusalem, when he wept and lamented over it.

In the preceding quotation Doctor Hawker says, that 'to preach the Gospel and proclaim salvation in the audience of all sinners, is the province of all faithful ministers—that here are the limits of human powers—that no man can go farther—that to persuade to the acceptation of Christ would be an invasion of the office of the Holy Spirit. To preach Christ is their province, to persuade to the acceptation of Christ is his.'

Is not the Holy Spirit emphatically styled

* Gal. iv. 19. † 2 Cor. xii. 15. ‡ Rom. i. 26.

the Comforter?* And is it not his province to comfort the people of God and to guide them into all truth? And yet who more officiously invades his office in these particulars than Doctor Hawker? One might naturally ask, whether he has a special power delegated to him by the Almighty for these purposes? Or whether it is more within the province of human powers to administer consolation to the soul of the distressed, or to "lead the blind in a way that they know not," than it is to "persuade men," and to invite them to come to Christ, and accept the salvation which is so freely given to every one that asks, "without money and without price?"†

But will Doctor Hawker, the champion of sovereign acts of grace, maintain that in the ministry of the divine word, there is a province assigned to the ministers of the gospel distinct and separate from the agency and influences of the Holy Spirit? Are we to learn from Doctor Hawker, that the knowledge of the gospel is acquired, and its

* John xiv. 26. † Isa. lv. 1

ministry executed merely by human powers? Will he teach us that the ministers of the gospel are sufficient for their work of themselves, and that all their sufficiency is not of God? The ministers whom the Doctor contemns, would deprecate their having any separate province of their own. They rejoice that all things are of God;* that, so far from being left to their own powers, they are "workers together with God," and that the Holy Spirit works in them and by them, "both to will and to do;"† that God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in their hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;‡ that it is not by their might or their power, that any thing is performed or effected, but by the Spirit of the Lord.|| They are the willing servants of Jesus Christ, and the voluntary instruments of the Holy Spirit. Though "the word of God," delivered by

* 2Cor. v. 18. † Phil. ii. 13. ‡ 2 Cor. iv. 6.
|| Zech. iv. 6.

them, "is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart;"* they most cheerfully acknowledge the power and the glory belong exclusively to the Lord, whose they are and whom they serve. They assume no authority, but preserve a most cheerful and entire subjection to him, whois head over all things to the church. Without him they can do nothing, for "through him, and to him, and by him, are all things."†

Not one of the evangelical ministers whom Dr. Hawker charges with preaching 'a motley religion,' and whose ministry he treats so contemptuously, would dare to ascribe so much to human powers, as in this instance is attributed to them by the Doctor himself. Nor would any one of them readily commit such an outrage upon every thing that is reasonable and just, as to represent the instrument as invading the office of the agent,

* Heb. iv. 12. † Rom. xi. 36.

in the execution of his own designs and work. With more propriety might he represent the servant as invading the office of his master when executing his orders; the soldier as invading the office of his general when fighting under his commands; or the hand as invading the office of the head when performing its dictates. Had Dr. Hawker considered ministers as mere machines, he would not thus have written. It is their moral agency which drives him to this glaring inconsistency, both with himself and the word of God. From the system which he has adopted and endeavours to support, it would appear, that he feels, as though the Almighty had no such control over moral agency, as to render it conducive to the accomplishment of his sovereign purposes. It would appear that, in Doctor Hawker's views, the moral agency of man and the sovereign will and grace of God are so incompatible with each other, that they must exercise different provinces, and cannot be combined in the accomplishment of the same end. Were Doctor Hawker to give a scriptural place, in

his system of theology, to the moral government of God, the kingly office of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the means and instruments by which the Holy Spirit executes his ministry, he would find no impediments, but rather encouragements, from the divine sovereignty, to his warning every man, and teaching every man, and to addressing all his hearers in the language of our Divine Master; "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." Then he would lay aside the restrictions which are so inconsistent with his office and patronage, as a minister of Him who is full of grace, and the possessor of all power in heaven and on earth. He would "go in the strengh of the Lord God," making mention of his righteousness, and of his only;* and in the language of scripture, with wisdom "cry," and with understanding "put forth his voice." He would stand in the top of the high places, by the way, in the places of the paths; he would cry at the gates, at the entry of the city,

* Psa. lxxi. 16.

Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men. O ye simple, understand wisdom; and ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart. Forsake the foolish and live, and go in the way of understanding."* He would then not be reluctant to enforce the command of God upon all men every where to repent.† With the most compassionate solicitude for his erring fellow creatures, he would address them in the language of the prophet, saying to all, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call yé upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon."‡ He would admonish a Simon Magus to repent and pray;|| he would reason with a Felix,§ and persuade an Agrippa to become a christian.¶ He would press upon the worldly minded, to seek first the kingdom of God and his right-

* Prov. viii. † Acts xvi. 30. ‡ Isa. lv. 6, 7.
|| Acts viii. 22. § Acts xxiv. 25. ¶ Acts xxvi. 28.

eousness;* and upon the thoughtless and negligent, to strive to enter in at the strait gate.† He would unite with the Spirit and the bride in saying, "Whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely."‡ This he would do from a sense of duty to God his Saviour, from a warm affection and most tender compassion to his fellow creatures, and also from a consciousness of awful responsibility, lest the blood of his hearers should be required at his hands.|| Then the venerable Doctor would not be so greatly concerned to proselyte his hearers and readers to his theological system, as he would be to watch for their souls as one that must give an account.

* Matt. vi. 33. † Matt. vii. 13. ‡ Rev. xxii. 17.
|| Ezek. iii. 18.

SECTION V.

Doctor Hawker defective in his Exhibitions of the Christian character and duties.

In the present state we know very little of the causes and nature even of those things with which we are the most familiar. Our judgment of them is generally formed by their effects, which are evident and demonstrable. To this rule of judgment we are often directed by the divine word.

Of the manner in which the Holy Spirit operates in the regeneration of a sinner, and becomes the efficient cause of the christian character, we are ignorant; and can decide on its reality and nature only by its results. "The wind," saith our Lord, "bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."*

* John iii. 8.

The christian religion gives the fullest evidence of its divine origin. Its professed design is to destroy the works of the devil,* by securing the recovery and the complete salvation of man, in connexion with the glory of God, so that it is preparatory to, and the commencement of, the heavenly state: we may therefore most reasonably conclude that its effects on the human character will be evident, decisive, gracious, and holy; and that they will not only be congenial with the system of christianity, but, also, will constitute a part of the salvation which it reveals. This just expectation is fully confirmed by the holy scriptures, which exhibit believers in our Lord Jesus Christ as new creatures;† as having passed from death unto life;‡ as delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of God;‖ as created after the divine image in righteousness and true holiness;§ as created in Christ Jesus unto

* 1 John iii. 8. † 2 Cor. v. 17. ‡ John v. 24.
‖ Acts xxvi 18. § Eph. iv. 24.

good works;* as the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the lights of the world, and the salt of the earth;† as the disciples of Christ, his servants and friends, who do whatsoever he commands them,‡ and trust, and love, and follow him; as those who know, love, and serve God;|| as those that are led by the Spirit and walk in the spirit;§ as the children and heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ;¶ as bearing the fruits of the spirit in all goodness, righteousness, and truth;** as called to be saints;†† as faithful brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling;‡‡ as those who are of the truth, in whom the truth dwelleth, and who walk in the truth.||||

In all their various relations and characters, the word of God presupposes corresponding obligations, and to them also applies and enforces suitable and appropriate duties: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things

* Eph. ii. 10. † Matt. v. ‡ John xv. 14.
|| Ps. ix. 10. § Rom. viii. 14. ¶ Rom. viii. 17.
** Eph. v. 9. †† Rom. i. 7. ‡‡ Heb. iii. 1.
|||| 2 John iv.

which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God."* "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of the light, proving what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."† These obligations and duties involve "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise," they are to "think on these things."‡

These passages of scripture exhibit a specimen of the character, the obligations, and duties of the children of God, for whom Doctor Hawker professes the highest esteem. *Of* them and *to* them he continually writes. With their exclusive privileges he is enraptured. On their relation to God in his everlasting and electing love, in his sovereign purposes and acts, he expatiates in terms peculiarly his own. 'They were,' says

* Col. iii. 1. † Rom. xii. 2. ‡ Phil. iv. 8.

the Doctor, 'formed with Christ, in the womb of the eternal mind, before they were formed in the womb of nature, and of consequence still more remote in the after stage of the womb of grace.'*

Estimating as Doctor Hawker does the high relations, exalted privileges, and glorious destiny of the people of God, one might justly expect that, when called on to exhibit their characters and to enforce their duties, he would excel all others in selecting the brightest portraiture of character afforded by the sacred pages; that he would point out the most necessary and just obligations which arise from the immensity of favour conferred on them, and that he would in the most earnest manner enforce the interesting and important duties which are so intimately connected with their relations, characters and privileges. But in all these most reasonable expectations we are utterly disappointed.

The general characters by which the Doctor designates the faithful in Christ Jesus, are,

* Heirs of Promise, p. 5.

'Those that know the plague of their own hearts,' and 'The regenerated children of God.' By one or other of these phrases they are distinguished, in almost perpetual recurrence.

For a person to be convinced of sin, and to have a knowledge of the natural deceitfulness and wickedness of his own heart, is undoubtedly necessary to his receiving our Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour, and is essential even to the commencement of the christian life. Yet this knowledge, as a feature of character, is chiefly, if not only, evident to the person by whom it is possessed; to others it can be known by its results alone. The inspired writers, therefore, generally bring home the charge of human depravity as an undeniable fact, or as a most humiliating doctrine. They uniformly exhibit the spirit, and the feelings with which moral depravity is contemplated as features of character. To love and commit sin, and to be hardened in the ways of transgression, is characteristic of the

wicked.* Whilst the righteous "sigh and cry for the abominations of" others †; and contemplate their own depravity with broken hearts and contrite spirits ‡; with deep humility and with earnest prayer to be "delivered from evil," || and that their ways may be directed to keep the divine statutes §.

For a person to know 'the plague of his own heart' is scarcely any description of character; it rather points out circumstances of affliction than features of character. The phrase is found only in the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple ¶; and however justifiable the accommodation, it is exceedingly questionable that Solomon used it in the sense for which it is employed by Dr. Hawker. To those who are not aware of the influence which the Doctor's system has on both his sentiments and language, it must be matter of great surprise

* Psalm cxix. 136. Ezek. ix. 6.

† Psalm xxxiv. 18. li. 10. Dan. ix. 3—19. Psalm cxix. 5, 6.

‡ Ps. li. 1—4. || Rom. vii. 24. § Ps. cxix. 5.

¶ 1 Kings viii. 38.

that he, who claims 'perfect harmony with Christ and his apostles,' should leave their multiplied descriptions of character, and go so frequently to a solitary phrase of Solomon, to designate the character of a disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The other phrase 'The regenerated child or children of God,' which he most frequently employs, does not once appear, in either the Old or New Testament. It is of human invention. It is also very doubtful in point of correctness.

Dr. Hawker evidently considers the elect as the children of God before they are born of the Holy Spirit, and have faith in the Son of God; and he makes regeneration to consist chiefly in revealing to its subjects their previous state or relation towards God.* Whereas the scriptural idea of regeneration is so far from being a mere revelation, or even an amendment of any preceding state or circumstance, that it is an entire renovation. It is a new creation, and makes per-

* See his comment on Gal. iv. 6.

sons what they previously were not. A sinner, who by nature was a child of wrath, when regenerated, becomes a saint and a child of God. "Ye are all the children of God," says the Apostle, "by faith in Christ Jesus;"* and "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new."† But to speak of a 'child of God regenerated,' and becoming a new creature, appears as inconsistent in itself, as it is unscriptural in its derivation. In addition to this it may be observed that, whilst the scriptures most decidedly insist on both the necessity and reality of regeneration, they certainly never present the act of the Spirit as a feature of character. Doctor Hawker himself gives a very sufficient reason for this, when he says, '*To crown all*, and to make the whole of this sovereign work *truly blessed*, the heirs of promise are themselves altogether as much passive in this new birth by grace, as mankind all are in the old birth by nature.'‡

* Gal. iii. 26. † 2 Cor. v. 17.

‡ Heirs of Promise, p. 7.

One may be allowed to suppose that no one, besides Doctor Hawker, would give a man's birth, in which he is 'altogether passive' as a feature, in the leading and most prominent feature of his character.

The reason of the Doctor's selecting the act of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, rather than its nature, or conversion and its other effects and fruits, is easily divined. The nature of regeneration, which is a new creation in righteousness and true holiness, and the fruits of the Spirit, as indicative of the christian character, imply personal holiness, moral agency, and the moral government of God; whilst the act of the Spirit on man in a passive state, can be contemplated as solely an act of sovereign grace.

In presenting us with the work in preference to the fruit of the Spirit, as the evidence of christian character, Doctor Hawker would teach us to discover the trees of righteousness, not by their predictions, but by their roots; not by that which appears, but by that which is secret; not by the graces and fruits of the Spirit produced by them,

but by the work of God upon them; not by the effects, but by the cause: reversing the maxim of our Lord who says, "by their fruits ye shall know them."*

It is by no means through necessity, but wholly by choice the Doctor is led to this expedient. He well knows that the fruits of the Spirit are features of character, and that they are, as stated by the apostle, "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."† That they are in all goodness and righteousness; and that "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." To exhibit these and other fruits of the Spirit as features of the christian character, would have implied that the trees which bore them were first made good, and so far have shown the Doctor's accordance with Christ and his apostles; but it would have been at a great remove from a perfect agreement with his theological sys-

* Matt. vii. 16. † Gal. v. 22—24.

tem, which Dr. Hawker, like a true partizan, never designedly forsakes.

The holy scriptures preserve not only a relation, but also an uniformity between privilege, character, and duty; and this is a powerful argument against a system which either separates them, or gives them a disproportioned relation to each other.

Dr. Hawker would give place to no man living in supporting what he conceives to be the privileges of the church. The church's privilege is not only his chief, but nearly his entire subject. He is great and high in privilege, but, as we have seen, low and very deficient in character. His deficiency in the delineation of the christian character, obtains no degree of compensation by the manner in which he states and enforces the christian duties.

The Doctor has a happy method of giving his reader an extended view of his subject in a few words. Thus he has given his full view of the christian duties in a very short compass: 'All, all, is of God's

will, God's work, God's act; the church is merely a receiver and no worker. The Lord undertakes for both. God saith, I will not; and the same God saith they shall not; and what can be needed more? Do not overlook these things. It is God who undertakes for them. He will do it, and there is nothing expected from themselves: and what God undertakes he will perform. The regenerated child of God, however slender his knowledge of divine things may be, manifests more of the sovereign work of grace upon his soul, by those two simple acts of spiritual life, than all the sermons and writings of unregenerate men; namely, by the incomings of grace being received spiritually; and the out goings of faith in spiritual enjoyment upon the persons of the Father, Son, and Spirit, through Jesus Christ.'* This summary of the duties which devolve on the disciples of Christ, forms a striking contrast with that given by the apostle in the 12th of Romans, and shews

* God's Will and Man's Shall, pp. 7, 8.

how vain is the Doctor's boast that his writings are in 'perfect harmony with those of Christ and his apostles.'

The views of Dr. Hawker on christian duties, as contained in the above assertions, are not more remarkable than are his omissions. Whilst writing, I have lying on the table ten different tracts written by the Doctor, all of which I have read with more than common diligence, and am really not aware that a single gospel precept is enforced in any one of them; or that the Doctor, in any instance, presses upon his readers those obligations to obey God, which arise either from his high commands, or from the aboundings of his grace and mercy in Jesus Christ.

The Doctor will not enforce the command of God, on men every where to repent, nor does he enforce the preceptive part of the gospel upon believers. Never did a divine cleave with greater partiality to the sovereignty of God in the dispensations of his grace; nor could any divine more carefully or uniformly exclude from those merciful dis-

pensations, every relation and bearing of the moral government of his God. He neither maintains the rights and claims of the governor on his rational creatures; nor does he enforce upon the redeemed those services of loyalty, love, and gratitude, which are due from them who "are bought with a price," and should glorify God with their bodies and their spirits which are his.*

Thus Doctor Hawker neither gives the leading features of the saints, nor points out nor enforces the appropriate duties of the servant of God. He will not admit of addresses to sinners, and omits the obligations of the saints; so that upon his plan the authority of God, in the preceptive part of the divine word, is rendered nugatory; and after all the Doctor's pretentions to an exhibition of superior privileges, the loyal, affectionate, and grateful disciple, would require a large and an important addition; embracing the precepts of his Lord and King: he would say, "He

* 1 Cor. vi. 20.

that loveth dwelleth in God, and God in him."* "This is the love of God that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous."†

* 1 John, iv. 16. † 1 John, v. 3.

SECTION VI.

Doctor Hawker defective on the Kingly Office of our Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTWITHSTANDING all the censures which Dr. Hawker so abundantly and constantly casts upon his brethren in the ministry, and the confidence with which he exhibits his own religious system, it is very evident that, in supporting his own professions of gospel truth, he is exceedingly partial and contracted.

The sovereignty of God in his purposes and acts is, as already acknowledged a part, a very important part, of the system of divine grace. But the moral government of God is also an essential part of the same system, and is certainly of equal importance: like the cherubim and wheels in Ezekiel's vision,* however in appearance diversified, complicated and distinct, they are in the strictest

* Ezek i.

union, their motions are in perfect concert, and all their movements contribute to the same end. It is the conjunction of the sovereign and moral government of God, in the economy of the gospel, which constitutes both its peculiarity and its excellence: by this all possible relations, rights, obligations and properties are secured and maintained.

The evils which arise from separating the sovereign and moral government of God, are strikingly illustrated in those who take the opposite extremes. They regularly become partizans. It engenders superciliousness, partiality to some parts of revelation, party phraseology, bitter contentions, unworthy suspicions, severe censures, and too frequently the sentence of condemnation.

These sad effects too often and very lamentably appear in the writings of the venerable Doctor Hawker. In almost every tract he has of late years published, the attentive reader will discover, not what we would all of us rejoice to see, the great, dignified and gracious divine, which would so well become his venerable age, and his station in the

church of which he is a minister; but on the contrary, he will with deep regret perceive too great a conformity to the contracted and censorious partizan.

Fixed as the Doctor is in his system, bold in his professions, and severe in his censures, he is by no means free from the charge of not acting up even to his own professions. He thus addresses his reader:—"Reader! what are your views of this subject? How have you learned Christ? If he who taught Paul hath taught you, surely you cannot look on in the present day but with great concern, when, every where around, we behold a vain and nay gospel so very generally substituted in the place of the full, free, and finished salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Where shall we go, to what congregation of what are called evangelical churches shall we join ourselves, to hear the person, work, offices, characters and relations of the Lord Jesus Christ, held up as the alpha and omega, in God's view and his people's view, of the

salvation of his people? Alas! what self-seeking and self-pleasing, human attainments and creature righteousness, men are taught to be looking after, instead of looking to Christ in order to recommend themselves to God. And what may we finally expect, nationally considered, will be the consequence, but as it was with Israel of old? Ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they rejected the Lord of life and glory. The Pharisees of those times were not chargeable with immoralities, for they prided themselves in those attainments. They did not neglect the ordinances of God's house, for they were strict to excess in all outward observances. But they slighted Him, by whom alone salvation could be obtained. And what national judgment followed? And very certain it is that the condemning sin of every people is thinking light of Him whom Jehovah delighteth to honour. O! what a tremendous judgment is contained in that one sentence: "For

the nation, and kingdom, that will not serve thee shall perish." Isa. lx. 12.*

Not to animadvert on the great uncharitableness of the above extract, who would suppose, from the very high and exclusive profession of Dr. Hawker, that he himself is chargeable with not holding up our Lord Jesus Christ scripturally and fully, in all his offices, characters and relations?

Our Lord sustains three most important offices in his church. He is the prophet, priest, and king. I will not stay to enquire whether the Doctor does scripturally and fully exhibit our Lord in his prophetic and priestly offices, or not: but I have no hesitation in saying that he fails greatly in 'holding him up to his people's view in his work, offices, characters, and relations,' as head over all things to the church, and as the king whom the Divine Father hath set upon his holy hill of Zion.† The holy scriptures give to the mediator the kingly office, as emphatically and exclusively as they do

* True Gospel, pp. 12, 13, 14. † Ps. ii. 6.

the priestly and prophetic. To reign is his by inheritance, by reward, by appointment and by excellence. Our Lord claims the kingdom of grace as his own; his servants speak of it as his kingdom. The Divine Father recognizes him as king, and has anointed him with the Holy Spirit to this office. From him emanate all its laws, by him were its ordinances instituted, under his righteous sceptre is the whole government administered. By him pardons are dispensed; and by him all that believe are justified. It is he our God and Saviour, who saves us by the "washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost."* It hath pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;† and out of his fulness all his servants receive, and grace for grace.‡ He it is who protects, defends, supports, supplies and succeeds his subjects. He perfects his strength in their weakness, and renders his grace sufficient for them.‖ To him all the subjects

* Tit. iii. 5. † Col. i. 19. ‡ John i. 16.
‖ 2 Cor. xii. 9.

of his kingdom owe allegiance; his laws only are to be obeyed; his authority only to be acknowledged, and he will be the judge at last. To him "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess."* As the king on the holy hill of Zion, as well as the great high priest of our profession; he is the alpha and the omega; Jesus Christ the same yesterday to day and for ever.†

Now Dr. Hawker not only omits to exhibit, maintain and enforce, according to the proportion of faith, the rights, authority, laws, and government of our Lord in his kingdom; but it appears as though he would supersede his kingly office and government, by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. 'No sooner had Jesus,' says the Doctor, ascended, than the Holy Ghost descended; and in an open display of himself, took upon him the more immediate government of the church, in his own personal ministry. And from the same unchanging love to the church, in watching over her best interests, he or-

* Phil. ii. 10, 11. † Heb. xiii. 8.

dained his servants the apostles, and inspired them with the spirit of prophecy, to forewarn the church of the awful heresies which should arise to mark the latter day.*

The views contained in this statement of the office and government of the Holy Spirit, pervade, and are the very soul of the Doctor's whole system. Our Lord is allowed to be the redeemer and saviour of the church as a priest. The vicarious engagements of his priestly office could not by any possibility be attributed to the Holy Spirit; but the government and present salvation of the church, he either directly or indirectly ascribes exclusively to the Holy Ghost. 'As the Lord the Spirit is the founder,' says Dr. Hawker, 'so is he the governor, preserver, teacher, comforter, sanctifier of the church in all ages."†

However such views of the divine economy in the government of the church, may accord with the system of divinity adopted and

* Best of remedies p. p. 3. 4.

† Comment on Acts iv.

taught by Dr. Hawker, I have not the least hesitation in rejecting them as incorreot, unscriptural, and incompatible with the filial rights, the mediatorial rewards, and the all pervading and perfect government of him who "must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."* Whilst the entire concurrence of the Holy Spirit with the Father and Son in the scheme of salvation is, by me, most devoutly received, and his agency readily and gratefully acknowledged to be most gracious, efficient, and divine; with the greatest earnestness I contend, that the office of the Holy Spirit in the economy of divine grace is so purely ministerial, that his agency in all respects redounds to the honour and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only and all sufficient head and governor of his church: that the divine Father "hath set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not

* 1 Cor. xv. 25.

only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." * Hence the Holy Spirit has graciously become the minister of Christ, and is spoken of as the Spirit of Christ; as sent by him; as the Spirit of truth, who shall guide into all truth; as not speaking of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak; as glorifying our Lord Jesus Christ by taking the things that are his and shewing them unto his people.† I most gratefully acknowledge that, in the sacred scriptures, the Holy Spirit appears as the presiding, the universal, the efficient and the perpetual minister of Jesus Christ our Lord. But at the same time, I do with most affectionate zeal contend that, in the same scriptures, our Lord Jesus Christ, "who loved the church and gave himself for it,"‡ is presented to us

* Eph. i 20—23. † John xvi. 7, 13, 14.
‡ Eph. v. 25.

as the only and unrivalled head, governor, king, and saviour in his kingdom, or church. The apostles therefore uniformly speak of themselves as ambassadors for Christ;* and as the apostles and servants of Christ, they had the honour and blessedness to be fellow-workers in God's husbandry and in God's building;† but they neither speak of themselves, nor are they spoken of in the holy scriptures as the servants of the Holy Ghost. It is not in the word of God, but in the writings of Dr. Hawker that the apostles receive this appellation.

From the above statement of Dr. Hawker one might be led to suppose that, when our Lord ascended to heaven he retired from the superintendence of the church, and that the Holy Spirit occupies the vacated throne. But in reality, so far was the time of our Lord's ascension into heaven from being the period of his terminating his government of the church, that it was eminently the day of his coronation, and of his installation into his

* 2 Cor. v. 20. † 1 Cor. iii. 9.

kingly office. It was then he took his seat at the right hand of God,* and was anointed with the oil of joy above his fellows.† The government is still upon his shoulders, and to conduct it prosperously he has all power in heaven and on earth.‡

The pouring out of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, was so far from being an instance of the Holy Ghost taking on himself the government of the church, that it was the direct and full evidence that our Lord had taken possession of his throne in heaven, from whence he was still carrying on his government, by his spirit, word, and ministers, on earth. The gift of the Spirit itself, was an act of his royal prerogative and munificence. "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted," says the Apostle Peter, "and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear."‖ This event, if there were no other, would

* Eph. i. 20. † Ps. xlv. 7. ‡ Matt. xxviii. 18.
‖ Acts ii. 33.

prove that the Holy Spirit did not assume any new, distinct, or separate government of the church; so far from it, that he did not even take upon himself a separate ministry, but wrought in, with, and by the apostles, and joined his witness with theirs, to the resurrection, exaltation, and reign of our Lord.* The Spirit's witness and ministry, well accord with what the Father saith unto the Son, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."†

The notion of the Holy Spirit having taken upon himself the government of the church at the period of our Saviour's ascension, may account for Dr. Hawker's so frequently speaking of the 'finished salvation of Christ;' as though all the works of our Lord and Saviour were accomplished when he rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven.

* Acts v. 31. † Heb. i. 8, 9.

Whereas the apostle tells us, that he is exalted to be "a Prince and a Saviour,"* to reign and save. "To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."†

We exultingly acknowledge that the work of redemption was then terminated; that as the great high priest of our profession, our Lord then finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in the everlasting righteousness ;‡ that when "he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high ;"‖ and that by one offering he has perfected for ever, them that were sanctified :§ but at the same time I most earnestly contend, that our Lord saves not only as a priest, but also as a king; that salvation in all its forms, and by whatever agency, means, or instrumentality effected, belongs to our Lord Christ; that every thing taught, done, or enforced in the church, is in his name and under his authority;

* Acts v. 31. † Rom. xiv. 9. ‡ Dan. ix. 24.
‖ Heb. x. 3. § Heb. x. 14.

and that every tongue should now confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* To Him belongs salvation, not only from condemnation and wrath, but also from ignorance, from the slavery of satan, from the dominion of sin, from the course of the world, from trouble, from temptation, from death and from the grave. It is he, the priest upon his throne, that is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by him;† and who delivers from every evil work, and preserves unto his heavenly kingdom.‡ It is he who will finally be the plague of death and the destruction of the grave,‖ and present his whole church unto himself, a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.§ Through him and by him, and for him are all things.¶ "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand."** "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment

* Phil. ii. 11. † Heb. vii. 25. ‡ 2 Tim. iv. 18.
‖ Hos. xiii. 14. § Eph. v. 27. ¶ I Cor. viii. 6.
** John iii. 35.

unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father."*

With this, and a thousand times more to the same purport, before him in the oracles of truth, how must Doctor Hawker's mind be wedded to hypothesis, and led astray by system, to insist so uniformly and so confidently as he does on Christ's work of salvation being at an end, and so exclusively on the Holy Ghost acting as the governor of the church. In this, it must be acknowledged, the Doctor is consistent with himself, although he is very far from supporting his claim to 'perfect consistency with Christ and his apostles.'

The partial and very contracted system which Dr. Hawker has adopted, naturally induces him thus to neglect the kingly office of our Lord, and to substitute for his government the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Upon this plan, he finds himself able to reduce the divine administration to sovereign acts of grace alone; but were he scripturally to intro-

* John v. 22.

duce the reign of the king Messiah, he would be obliged to unite with these acts the moral government of God, involving the extensive obligations and high responsibility of men. He would then proclaim the sovereign acts and blessings of divine grace, as administered by a king who reigns in righteousness,* who with righteousness judgeth the poor, and reproves with equity for the meek of the earth; who smites the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips slayeth the wicked, who hath righteousness for the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness for the girdle of his reins.†

Were Doctor Hawker scripturally attentive to the authority, laws and government of this righteous and gracious reign, he might be much less soothing to some of his admirers, and cease to obtain their unqualified and loud applause: but at the same time he would, with sound words that could not be condemned, be more just to his numerous hearers and readers; and

* Isa. xxxii. 1. † Chap. xi. 4, 5.

would more eminently approve himself to him, who hath enjoined on his ministers to teach his disciples to "observe all things whatsoever he hath commanded:"* who also hath given his servants assurance that they are always attended by his presence; that when "he shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; he will reward every man according to his works;"† and that the final award of his approbation will be given, with "well done good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."‡

* Matt. xxviii. 20. † Matt. xvi. 27. ‡ Matt. xxv. 21.

SECTION VII.

Doctor Hawker defective on the honour due to the Divine Father.

HOWEVER painful the service to point out the mistakes of a minister, so venerable for years and so very zealous in his labours; truth and justice demand of me to observe, before I close, that Doctor Hawker's system induces him not only to detract from the kingly office of our Lord Jesus Christ, but also to withhold the honours due to the prerogative and office of the Divine Father. Thus he expresses himself: 'God the Holy Ghost hath manifested his equal love of the church, in anointing both head and members; when the Father chose the church, and the Son married the church, before all time; by which the Son of God was called Christ, in whom the church was chosen.'*

* Health, &c. p. 10.

In his True Gospel, he says, 'God the Holy Ghost's love is demonstrated with equal clearness in the scriptures of truth, in having anointed both Christ and his church from the beginning, and by his regenerating grace, during the time-state of the church, raised her up together with Christ, and made her sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.'*

What Doctor Hawker attributes to the Holy Ghost and to regenerating grace, other divines would ascribe to the Divine Father; when he raised the high priest of our profession, the head and representative of the whole church, from the grave, and placed him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, that "in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus."† On this occasion the High Priest entered into the holy place not made with hands, with the names of his spiritual Israel engraved as on his breast plate.

* Pp. 9, 10. † Eph. ii. 7.

They were all represented by him who could say, "Father I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*"

Respecting the period when the Holy Ghost anointed Christ and his members, "From the beginning," "Before all time," says the Doctor; i. e. The Holy Ghost anointed Christ and his members from all eternity—it may suffice to observe, that for any thoughtful christian to receive such an assertion, it would require previous explanation and strong proof; neither of which has the Doctor deigned to give.

It is very probable that the reason of the omission was, that proof there was none, and explanation impossible. Whilst I mention these things, that which I particularly notice in the above extracts is the Doctor's repeated

* John xvii. 2, 4.

assertion that the Holy Ghost anointed Christ and his members. In this assertion I cannot but consider Dr. Hawker as exceedingly incorrect and unscriptural.

I am by no means at issue with the Doctor in relation to the divine existence in the personality of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; yet on so sublime and awful a subject, I should certainly prefer a much more scriptural phraseology than that which is generally employed by him. It is respecting the distinct offices sustained by the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and the works ascribed to these offices in the holy scriptures that I am compelled to dissent.

The anointing of prophets, priests and kings, when appointed or inducted to their respective offices is often adverted to in the economy of divine grace. In these allusions Christ and his members are the anointed ones. The Holy Spirit, in his influences and graces, is the unction with which they are anointed by the Divine Father. In the literal transaction,

Doctor Hawker might with as much propriety assert that the oil itself anointed the kings of Israel, as he could represent the figurative allusion to denote the Holy Spirit anointing Christ and his members. It must have been in his own imagination only, the Doctor could find that the Holy Ghost anointed our Lord, and thus appointed and inducted him to his mediatorial offices. The Doctor finds it so essential to his system to substitute the operations of the Holy Spirit for the legal and royal government of our Lord Jesus Christ, that to do honour to the offices of the divine Spirit he is tempted to invade the prerogatives of both the Father and the Son.

Had the Doctor followed the general tenor of scripture, rather than his own system, he would have had a very plain path laid before him. The particular instances of our Lord's baptism and his session at the right hand of God, would have given the same direction to his views. And if after all he had hesitated, an inspired apostle would have informed him most expressly, that "God anointed

Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost."* But to those who leave the law and the testimony, and venture to devise a system of their own, and surrender themselves to its support, the general and evident dictates of the divine word, supported by the express declaration of an apostle, will too seldom present insuperable obstacles, either to the exercise of confidence in a favorite hypothesis, or to the ardour of zeal in maintaining its credit.

* Act x. 38.

THE END.

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